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## SOME ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY OF WEST AND NORTHWEST TEXAS SINCE 1845

R. C. CRANE

While West and Northwest Texas were settled and developed after Texas had ceased to be a republic and had become a state of the Union, yet that settlement and development came under conditions and policies inherited from the republic.

The fixed and almost uniform policy of the people of our country from the earliest colonial adjustments with the aborigines had been one of agreement by treaty regarding boundaries and mutual rights and relations. President Sam Houston in his first term had followed that policy for Texas with the result that little trouble was experienced with the Indians in the young republic during that administration; but President Lamar, following him, fixed on Texas for all time the policy of warfare on the Indian and expulsion from Texas, or extermination.

For nearly forty years West and Northwest Texas felt the ill effects of that policy; and the consequent animosity always existing between settlers and Indians in Texas had a marked effect in delaying the settlement and development of those regions of the state especially.

Nearly every other part of Texas was settled under a system of land laws under which the first colonists were granted their homes at the rate of a league to the family and a third of a league to the single person. Several million additional acres were granted for military and other services. Later, settlers were granted smaller tracts conditioned on occupancy.

But the settlement and development of that part of the state in question had its commencement after Texas became a state, and under conditions materially different; and its history (including the Panhandle) is as distinct, and its growth and development especially during the past forty years just as phenomenal as had been that of any other part of the state. By coming into the Union, Texas had a right to look to the general government and its army for protection against the Indian and his depredations. And yet that the history of this region is peculiar to itself, calling

for somewhat different treatment; and the fact that the agencies and the army of the United States have had a largely controlling effect in the exploration and the protection of its frontiers, and hence its settlement and development have been, it appears to me, too little realized by those of us interested in the history of Texas. The history of the region is little touched on as a thing worth while, though it contains in area at least one-half of the state, and supports a population several times as great as Texas contained when it came into the Union. Its settlers bought their lands and their homes from the school funds of Texas and from the various railroads and their assignees; lands that had been granted by Texas at the rate of sixteen sections to the mile, in aid of the construction of railroads nearly entirely in other parts of the state.

The policy of thus granting public lands in aid of railroad construction commenced in Texas in 1854 and closed with the exhaustion of the public lands in 1882 when the Southern Pacific and the Texas & Pacific Railways were being connected with a Pacific coast line at El Paso. More railroads were needed to settle and develop the country; but railroads needed people and traffic in the region before they could afford to build, and therefore a slow waiting process commenced about 1882 for West and Northwest Texas, and continued for several years.

But going back, the discovery of gold in California had its bearing on these parts of Texas. For it was by reason of gold in California, and the consequent need of finding and making roads for the Argonauts and for military purposes due to the great westward expansion of our nation following the annexation of Texas and its access of territory following the Mexican war, that the discovery was made that West and Northwest Texas covered a vast region well fitted for white settlers to occupy.

The annexation of Texas brought on the Mexican war; and gold being discovered in California immediately after its occupation after peace, brought a flood of immigrants and gold seekers trooping over mountains and plains who must be provided with roads to the new Golconda, and furnished protection while *en route*. Routes for these roads had to be discovered by explor-

ing hitherto unknown regions, and trails and roads had to be made so that they could be traveled.

The years 1849 and 1850 were busy years for the engineers of the army in exploring unknown West and Northwest Texas for roads, from San Antonio and from Red River to El Paso, there to connect with roads to California. At least two men who rose to distinction during the war between the states—General Joseph E. Johnston and General R. B. Marcy, father-in-law and chief of staff to General Geo. B. McClellan—were engaged in this work, General Johnston from San Antonio and General Marcy from Red River.

In the nature of things these regions being occupied or infested by hostile Indians, the exploration of the country and its resources greatly depended on the efforts put forth by the agencies of the general government; and the discovery of many of the mineral resources of Texas has been the result of those efforts and explorations. But with the rush of gold-seekers to California the need became urgent for roads that could be traveled the year round, free from the dangers and difficulties incident to the trails further north across mountains and plains. This gave to West and Northwest Texas the chance to be discovered.

In the territory of the United States as it existed prior to the annexation of Texas and the Mexican war, there were sixty-three military posts in the whole country. In the year 1851 after the gain of territory greater than was contained in the organized states and territories in the whole country before the two events mentioned, there were one hundred and nine military posts, forty-six of which were in the newly acquired territory, the great bulk of which was unsettled and infested with Indians more or less hostile. Nineteen of these posts were in Texas—mostly in West and Northwest Texas. The army had been increased from something over 8,000 men to less than 13,000, an increase not nearly in proportion to the increased needs and demands on it, incident to the vast increase in territory to be covered and protected. Repeatedly did the generals of the army call attention of Congress to the insufficiency in the numbers of the men of the army to afford efficient frontier protection, but usually with little notable effect.

When Texas was admitted to the Union, the extreme western posts were located at Fort Jessup, in Louisiana; Forts Towson, Washita and Gibson, Indian Territory; Forts Scott and Leavenworth, in Kansas; Forts Atkinson and Snelling, in Minnesota, and Fort Wilkins, on Lake Superior. In 1849 there was a chain of United States Army forts across Texas, running from Fort Duncan on the Rio Grande, by Fort Marvin Scott at Fredericksburg, Fort Croghan in Burnet County, Fort Gates in Coryell County, Fort Graham in Hill County on the Brazos, and Fort Worth in Tarrant County.

Several of these had just been established, but as a result of a survey of "Western Texas" made in the fall of 1849 by Lieutenant Whiting, between that time and 1853, the imaginary line between Texas belonging to the white man, and Texas given over to the Indian, was moved westward, and Forts Marvin Scott, Croghan, Gates and Worth were abandoned, and Forts Belknap, in Young County, and McKavett, in Menard County, Mason, in the county of the same name, Chadbourne, now in Coke County, Phantom Hill, in Jones County, and Stockton, in Pecos County, were established, in addition to several other posts on the Rio Grande.

According to the United States Quartermaster General of the army in 1851 there was not then in all of Texas, New Mexico, California or Oregon, a steamboat line, or a railroad, or even a turnpike road, and all transportation over nearly the whole region west of the Mississippi River was by the slow moving wagon train, drawn by oxen or mules. When supplies had to be gotten to the new frontier forts, in Texas and elsewhere, the increase in the cost of transportation was so great as to alarm the officers of the army; and thereupon this cost problem was investigated.

Fort Leavenworth had steamboat navigation on the Missouri River, and had been a frontier fort before the Mexican war. Indianola was then the leading port on the Texas coast. The army conducted a series of experiments from Indianola and from Fort Leavenworth to El Paso and the forts of New Mexico, by regular army wagon trains and by contract, and ascertained that the cost was about the same either way, and found that the cost of transporting army supplies between these points amounted to about \$22 per hundred pounds. A large part of this cost, where

done by contract, was incident to furnishing military escort and protection through the Indian infested country traversed, which was necessary.

Again, roads had to be found and made by the men of the army, for this army transport traffic, between posts, and for all other needed purposes. High army officials recommended that all of the cavalry be stationed in Texas and New Mexico, and repeatedly called attention to urgent need for more cavalry for the frontiers of Texas. Finally just before the war between the states another cavalry regiment was added by Congress and stationed in Texas, with Robert E. Lee as colonel; W. J. Hardee, lieutenant colonel, and Earl Van Dorn and George H. Thomas as majors.

But this moving back of the imaginary frontier line by the establishment of the outer line of forts mentioned did not take place until Captain R. B. Marcy had in 1849 made his path-finding expedition from Fort Smith, Arkansas, westward through what is now Oklahoma, and the Panhandle of Texas to Santa Fé, New Mexico, and, returning, had logged the Marcy trail from El Paso, Texas, to Preston, on Red River near the present city of Denison, along the general route later followed by the construction of the Texas & Pacific Railroad. Such a route and such a trail up to that time were thought to be impossible; and only through the aid of the noted Delaware Indian guide, Black Beaver, who knew the wild, uninhabited (except by roving bands of Indians) country traversed, were they made possible.

In his outward journey, in crossing the plains, Captain Marcy kept to the south of the Canadian River, and from his account evidently passed through Hemphill, Roberts, Hutchinson, Carson, Potter, and Oldham Counties. His description of his first view and impression of the plains becomes of interest in view of the subsequent development of that region. Under date of June 14, 1849, in his log book, Captain Marcy says: "Leaving camp early this morning, we travelled two miles on our course when we encountered a spur of the plain running too far east for us to pass around; and finding a very easy ascent to the summit, I took the road over the plain. When we were upon the high tableland, a view presented itself as boundless as the ocean. Not a tree, shrub

or any other object, either animate or inanimate, relieved the dreary monotony of the prospect—it was vast, illimitable expanse of desert prairie—the dreaded Llano Estacado, or, in other words, the great Sahara of North America. It is a region almost as vast and trackless as the ocean—a land where no man, either savage or civilized, permanently abides; it spreads forth into a treeless, desolate waste of uninhabited solitude, which always has been and must continue uninhabited forever; even the savages dare not venture to cross it except at two or three places where they know water can be found.”

Captain Marcy could not then foresee that in 1919 the counties which he was traversing would produce nearly 2,500,000 bushels of wheat, and in 1920 would contain nearly 30,000 people. On this first day on the plains, he “made a long drive of twenty-eight miles on a perfectly hard and smooth road, with no ill effects” to his animals.

When Captain Marcy had finished logging his trail from El Paso to Preston, on Red River, he gave unqualified endorsement to its practical utility, and expressed his belief that a large part of the country was capable of great agricultural development. He professed familiarity with the mountain routes to California, and claimed that his route was better in every respect than the mountain trails across the continent.

Straightway after the logging of this new trail emigrant travel to the Pacific coast set in over it, and Forts Belknap, Cooper, Phantom Hill, and Chadbourne were established on or near it for the protection from Indians of this travel and of the expanding waves of settlers from other portions of the state, in search of new homes.

In January and in September, 1850, the Legislature of Texas passed strong resolutions calling on the United States government to place adequate armed forces on the borders of Texas to protect the lives and property of its citizens from marauding Indians, asserting that the state had a right to expect this under the terms of annexation.

In 1851 several tribes of Indians, numbering in all something like 1,200, were settled in peaceful agricultural pursuits on the Brazos, in Young County. These included the Caddos, Keechies,

Wacos, and Delawares. In that year Colonel Cooper, later adjutant of the army, and Colonel Hardee made visits to these Indians and left descriptions of the trips and of the situation and conditions of the Indians.

In 1854, for the first time, Texas agreed through its Legislature to the settlement of her resident Indians on reservations, and in that year passed a law providing for the survey by the United States of twelve leagues of land, giving jurisdiction over the same to the general government, with authority to establish and maintain Indian agencies, military posts, etc. And thereupon Captain Marcy, who was probably one of the government's most dependable explorers and pathfinders, was sent to Texas to make selection of the sites for the reservations thus provided for. This was in the summer and fall of 1854. W. B. Parker was an attache of this expedition, going along for the purpose of collecting all manner of specimens to be found in the country traversed, and he wrote upon his return a detailed account of the trip and its experiences, giving much information about the country traveled over, and its condition, topography, etc.

At least sixteen of the present counties of Texas, mainly in Northwest Texas, were explored by Captain Marcy on this trip, including Cooke, Montague, Clay, Archer, Baylor, Knox, King, Dickens, Crosby, Haskell, Jones, Shackelford, Throckmorton, Stephens, Young and Jack.

The expedition was fitted out at Fort Smith, and the military escort was furnished from Fort Arbuckle. It crossed into Texas at Preston, and traveled westward. It passed through Gainesville, then on the extreme western skirts of the settlements in that part of Texas. Gainesville then contained, according to Parker, five or six log cabins, and had then just been rendered somewhat famous in the annals of storms by a most terrific tornado which had occurred a few months before. Parker gives many interesting details of the storm in and about Gainesville. He says that in an hour's time after leaving Gainesville, Captain Marcy and his expedition passed the last house on his route; and all west of him was then a trackless, uninhabited waste! And not another white person was seen while traversing all of the region covered by the counties named, until the party reached the



little frontier fort at Belknap, several months later. The party caught great messes of catfish out of an unnamed creek near the foot of the plains, and thereupon Captain Marcy named it Catfish creek. Other instances of the same character are mentioned.

But he was on the lookout for suitable locations for the Indian reservations he was sent out to find, and finding none to suit him better, he had surveys made in the vicinity of where the Indians were already settled on the Brazos, and on the Clear Fork of the Brazos for a branch of the Comanches.

The act of the Legislature providing for these reservations called for them to be located within twenty miles of the chain of forts maintained by the United States government. Captain Marcy, in conjunction with Major Neighbors, the Indian agent, had met and conferred with the Indians, and had secured their consent to occupy the reservations thus made for them.

But Captain Marcy, in reporting his previous pathfinding expedition, had given the route then laid out by him his unqualified endorsement as affording the very best route for the construction of a railroad to the Pacific coast, following which and its further survey westward the Gadsden Purchase had been made to secure from Mexico needed land over which to construct such a railroad; and, therefore, in 1854, when Captain Marcy was locating the Indian reservations, the construction of railroads through West and Northwest Texas was in the air, and the Legislature in providing for the Indian reservations retained a three hundred-foot right-of-way through them for the construction of a railroad, if so surveyed, charters for which had already been granted by Texas.

The Texas & Pacific Railway was subsequently built through that region, but some thirty miles to the south of the Indian reservations.

From 1849 onward interesting facts are laid up in the official reports of the government, bearing on Indian warfare in the portion of Texas in question; on explorations for finding roads for military and migration purposes, it being essential to locate along the road sites grass and water at convenient camping places, preferably twelve to twenty miles apart for the use of the numerous wagon trains passing through the country. Where surface

water could not be had wells, and in some instances, artesian wells were drilled, especially in the region of the Pecos. The haunts of the Indians had to be hunted out, and additional locations of army posts had to be made occasionally. The growing travel to the Pacific coast must be provided for and protected that the newly acquired coast possessions with their gold fields might be developed. And thus the stock of information about West and Northwest Texas was continually added to.

Naturally, without railroads, the question of transportation otherwise was a very live question to be met for its own purposes, at least by the general government during that period of time before the war between the states. In his report in December, 1853, Secretary of War Jefferson Davis showed that he had given study to the question, and then gave cogent reasons for the use of the camel for experimental purposes, "to test their value and adaption to our country and our service." He cited their satisfactory use by Napoleon in his Egyptian campaign, and in other countries where somewhat the same conditions existed; and his recommendations were adopted and the camels imported and used for several years, until the war broke out in 1861. In 1857 Secretary Floyd commended their use in Arizona, and in 1860 General Lee expressed his satisfaction with their use in the rocky and mountainous regions of the Pecos, he being in command in Texas.

In this year Secretary Floyd gave his hearty endorsement, as preferable to any other, to this southern route for the construction of the much needed railroad to the Pacific coast, surveys for which over various routes had been made.

The reconnaissance of the route through Northwest Texas afterwards followed in general by the Texas & Pacific Railway had been made, and interesting and detailed information of the results thereof from Fort Chadbourne to the west have been left in print.

The Indian reservations mentioned had been short lived, and the Indians had been removed to Indian Territory. United States Army records give interesting facts about the causes leading to that outcome which have been but meagerly used by writers on Texas history.

In the fall of 1858, the then next best thing to a railroad—the stage coach—had been in operation across West Texas from San Antonio to San Diego, California, through El Paso, a distance of 1,200 miles; and over the Marcy trail across West and Northwest Texas from St. Louis to San Francisco by way of El Paso, a distance of 2,700 miles. This was said to be 40 per cent longer than any other stage line in our history and also the longest in the world. This line was known as the Butterfield Southern Overland Mail. At Preston was the first division out of St. Louis; at Fort Chadbourne was the second; at El Paso the third, and thence to Tucson, Fort Yuma, and the sixth and last division at San Francisco. Its coaches started simultaneously from St. Louis and San Francisco on a twenty-five-day schedule, and beat the schedule by one day, and each was greeted by a mighty ovation. Its equipment consisted of more than one-hundred Concord stage coaches, one thousand horses, five hundred mules, and seven hundred and fifty men, including one hundred and fifty drivers. It began as a semi-weekly but was soon promoted to six times a week, and from the first its operations had the effect of advertising and greatly aiding in the settlement of the country through which it passed, notably Fort Belknap and Young County, which it put on something of a boom.

It was promoted by John Butterfield and was successfully operated until the war between the states came on, when it was transferred to a shorter route, where it took its chances with the snows.

The same event that put a stop to the Butterfield stage line also put a stop to the growing possibilities of the early settlement and development of West and Northwest Texas for twenty years to come. When the war came on, owing to the exigencies of military necessity in the South, small attention could be paid to the Indian, and for years he roamed almost at will over Texas frontiers; and practically all intercourse with the Pacific coast stopped short.

Many men who made names for themselves on both sides of the controversy were in the United States Army in the portion of Texas in question, when the war came on, as colonels, lieutenant colonels, majors, captains and lieutenants. Among the number who afterwards wore the gray were Generals R. E. Lee, Fitzhugh

Lee, E. Kirby Smith, John B. Hood, Earl Van Dorne, and W. J. Hardee; while George H. Thomas, George Stoneman, W. M. Graham, S. D. Sturgis, S. P. Heintzleman, and William B. Hazen wore the blue, all of whom were on the frontiers of Texas at or just before the clash of arms came, all helping to make possible and desirable the settlement and development of West and North-west Texas to the full limit of their allotted duties.

During the period of the war there is little to be said with assurance with reference to border conditions.

When the soldiers came back to the Texas frontier, Phantom Hill and Camp Cooper were not reoccupied. Forts Belknap and Chadbourne were for a time reoccupied, but were abandoned, and Forts Richardson, Griffin and Concho were built and occupied in their places, during the brief time that General W. S. Hancock was in command in Texas. Other posts were occupied. As late as 1874 maps of Texas assigned large sections of the plains country to the Comanche Indians as hunting grounds under the treaty of 1865.

Until 1876 all of that vast region lying north of a line extended westward from the southeast corner of Nolan County, and west of a line extended northward from the same place, comprised successively parts of Bexar and Young land districts, and was in that year carved by the Legislature into fifty-four counties. There was also enough territory in Tom Green County at that time to make twelve additional counties, which was done from time to time afterwards.

When General E. O. C. Ord was in command of United States troops in Texas, in his report for 1877-1878 he summed up the situation as it then existed as follows: "The people of Northern and Western Texas were during the Civil War and for some years afterwards, raided upon and their settlements forced back from fifty to one hundred miles, and hundreds of people were killed by the Comanches, Apaches, and other Indians from the Wichita country, the staked plains and occasionally from Mexico; but during the years 1874 and 1875 active campaigns against these bands within our limits resulted in their capture or retreat to the mountains of Mexico, bordering on the Rio Grande . . . and it is from these mountains that they have kept up a regular system

of depredations upon stock raisers on the frontier counties of Texas, so that about in proportion as the demand for land increases for the use of the rapidly increasing flocks and herds, the dangers attending the stock farmer in those counties have grown and become known."

He says that "the murders and robberies committed by the Indians have so long furnished the staple news of Western Texas papers that people of the country have almost come to look upon this state of affairs as the normal condition of things as for a long period of time it has been in Sonora, Chihuahua and parts of Coahuila, and to regard it as part of the Texas ranchman's duty to put up with the regular full moon raid and its accompanying horrors." He then calls attention to the fact that according to Father Saddelmayer this character of warfare had been going on in parts of Mexico for nearly two hundred years.

General Ord further says in the same report: "The Texans during the war and reconstruction have submitted to the murdering of the frontier inhabitants and the plundering of the border settlements because they did not see any other way of relief; but now . . . they feel that something should be done to make life and property secure on the border."

About 19,000 miles were traveled that year according to General Ord, by the soldiers of the nation in scouts and expeditions after Indians in the portion of Texas under discussion; while in the following year 40,000 miles were covered in one hundred and twenty different expeditions from thirteen regular and thirteen sub-posts and scouting camps on the borders by two full regiments of cavalry, four regiments of infantry and two companies of artillery.

In the Pecos country where no railroad had then penetrated, the Indians were still troublesome. The mail routes and the settlements had to be protected by the soldiers; and the Indians had to be forced out of that region and kept cut by the soldiers. And General Ord says that: "the intended result has been practically accomplished. All Indians penetrating the country have been so hotly pressed by the troops as to prevent their doing much damage."

From the plains region occasional raids by Indians continued until about this time when General Mackenzie fought a last decisive engagement with a large band of them near what is now Claude in Armstrong County and demolished the Indian forces

and sent them scurrying back to their haunts never again to act as a hindering force against the settlement and development of Northwest Texas.

In 1874 under Governor Coke the Texas Ranger force was re-organized and about four hundred men placed in the field, and about this number of men were kept in service until the Indians were finally disposed of. They were unafraid and followed many an Indian trail, and had many a brush with Indians, and are entitled to great credit for the part they had in the pacification of West and Northwest Texas from the border ruffian, the outlaw, and the Indian. But history will not bear out the accuracy of the statement "that the Texas Rangers drove the Indians out of Texas," as recently claimed in a book by an ex-Texas Ranger.

Since 1880 there have been no Indians in Texas to fight, and therefore her people have been busy with the battles of peace.

In 1879 for the first time the Legislature felt called on to pass land laws affecting West and Northwest Texas, when the pioneering cattlemen began "trekking" in greater numbers to the frontiers with their herds. In 1882 the Texas & Pacific and the Southern Pacific railways completed their tracks at El Paso to a connection with the long delayed railroad line to the Pacific coast. Since that time about fifteen hundred miles of other lines of track have been built, making possible the addition to Texas of the Empire of West and Northwest Texas, dotted with dozens of cities ranging in population up to 80,000 souls, and peopled with probably the largest proportion of Anglo-Saxon strain to be found in our whole country.

Of the growth and development of the last forty years I have not planned to deal at this time. I have not sought to be exhaustive but rather suggestive only of a line of thought and investigation, and of sources of light thereon in the study of Texas history which appear to me have been too little used.

The battles of peace as fought by the people of the region in question in conquering the elements, and in their fight against lack of understanding of their difficulties and conditions—so different from many other localities—have been at times quite as strenuous as any Indian warfare ever staged. And if her people have measurably succeeded it may be because history has repeated itself, and that the instances in other sections of our common country

where God-fearing, sturdy men and women with the blood of pioneers in their veins have gone into the wilderness and made forest and plains to blossom as the rose, have been somewhat followed and duplicated on the plains, valleys and hills of West and Northwest Texas.

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I have not had access to the several volumes printed by Captain Marcy on his experiences in the army in his services in the Southwest though I feel sure they throw much light on my subject. And while I have a file of the Texas Almanac, I have not examined them especially in the preparation of this paper.